



MEMORANDUM
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DATE: August 4, 2006

TO: George Burgess
County Manager

FROM: 
Carlos Alvarez, Mayor
Miami-Dade County

SUBJECT: Public Housing Vacancies

It has come to my attention that the Miami-Dade Housing Agency (MDHA) currently has over 1,000 vacant public housing units in its inventory. A majority of the units (approximately 900) require some extent of renovation and repair, but the fact remains that there are over 100 units ready for occupancy at this time. There is no reason for further delay in moving families into these units as soon as possible – we own the land, the units are already constructed, and deserving families have been identified. As we must hold recipients of our public dollars accountable for the use of these funds, we must reassure this community that the County is doing everything in its capacity to alleviate the affordable housing crises.

It is unacceptable that this level of vacancy exists, especially as the lack of affordable housing has grown acute not only for our poor and elderly, but also for our professional workforce, and as thousands of residents struggle to maintain temporary housing arrangements while they remain on our waiting list. Because it is clear that a shortage of MDHA maintenance staff has left many public housing units uninhabitable, an assessment of staffing needs and available resources should be undertaken immediately so that a vacancy reduction plan can be implemented.

As the review and investigations of the MDHA are underway, I also expect reviews of maintenance schedules for public housing and turnover of housing units so that we can accelerate filling new vacancies. I am requesting a status report on these vacant units within ten (10) days, including realistic timeframes for when these units will be occupied. It is of great urgency for us to fill these units on a priority basis, not only for the benefit of our neediest residents, but to rebuild public confidence in our housing efforts.

c: Honorable Chairman Joe A. Martinez and Members,
Board of County Commissioners
Honorable Harvey Ruvlin, Clerk of Courts
Murray Greenberg, County Attorney
Kay Sullivan, Director, Clerk of the Board
Cynthia Curry, Senior Advisor to the County Manager